

part of this valley. The solid matter which it brought down was deposited on the bottom, with the result that the river-bed at once began to be elevated. The process was continued until the bed of the river was above the level of the surrounding country. The water, naturally, then sought a lower level, leaving the first bed high and dry. This, in a few years, was covered with a forest of cypress trees. In the meantime the river began to elevate its second bed, as it had elevated the first. In due course, that also became higher than the surrounding country, was then deserted for a third channel, and soon covered with a cypress forest. It will be sufficient to say that the third and all subsequent channels were treated in the same way as the first two. The river at one time or other flowed over every part of the valley. It could not go outside certain limits because of the bluffs. Every part of the surface was elevated in turn, and in time the first bed, which was deserted because it was the highest part of the valley, had again become the lowest. Then the river returned to it, and found growing there a forest of cypress trees, which it promptly levelled, and soon covered with a layer of the solid matter brought down by the water. In due course this bed was again deserted, and after every other part of the valley had been elevated, was again sought. Enough has now been said to enable the reader to understand the process. The alluvial matter of the valley has been found to be 528 feet deep, and to contain eleven cypress forests, showing that the river has run over some parts as many as eleven times. The rate at which the matter is being deposited can be measured, and is known. Human remains have been discovered in many parts of the delta, under several of the buried forests, and in one case in a stratum which all geologists are agreed is older than all of them. The minimum time which has elapsed since those remains were deposited where they were found has been ascertained in the following manner: The age of a tree can always be found by counting its rings of annual growth. The geologists took one tree from each of the buried forests, counted its rings, added all together, and got a total of over fifty-seven thousand years. Let it be borne in mind that this is but the minimum age of the remains. Each of the forests may have lived much longer than any one of its trees, longer in fact than a dozen trees, but we know it must have lived as long as one. Besides, in this calculation no account is taken of the long periods which elapsed between the destruction of one forest and the birth of the next. That enormous mass of alluvial matter probably took hundreds of thousands of years to accumulate. But, taking the minimum named, it follows that fifty-seven thousand years ago men lived in North America. What, then, must we think of the statement that man was first made less than six thousand years ago?

But one need not go to America to find proofs of man's antiquity. They exist here at home. Near the town of Torquay in Devonshire, there is a cavern called Kent's Cavern, in a limestone hill, which will probably satisfy the most exacting inquirer. Kent's Cavern is simply a hole in the rock, with a floor of dissolved limestone, commonly called stalagmite. In order that the reader may appreciate the significance of the facts, it is necessary to explain how this substance is formed. Pure water will not dissolve limestone, but a slight admixture of the gas known as carbonic acid will enable it to do so. This exists in the air and in plants. The rain, in falling, acquires a little car-